

The Review Crew



What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

Brought to you by the Denver Public Schools Book Review Committee.

Volume 9 Number 9

May 2013

Fiction

Dirty Gert

Written and Illus. By: Tedd Arnold

Holiday House, 2013

ISBN: 9780823424047

Curriculum: Trees; Stories in rhyme; Humor

Dirt is Gert's favorite food! Her parents give up trying to civilize and simply supervise their unusual child. She begins to sprout roots and leaves, slowly turning into a tree. As Gert transmogrifies, her friends don't recognize, neighbors want to sanitize, her brother wants to disguise, the media to televise, lawyers legalize, doctors analyze, Hollywood immortalize, till it all begins to traumatize. Arnold's googly-eyed characters include a trio of earthworms providing running commentary. Ridiculous good fun.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Alumni



Open Very Carefully: A Book With Bite

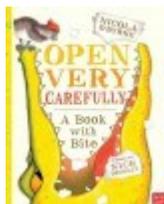
By: Nick Bromley

Illus. by: Nicola O'Bryne

Nosy Crow, 2013

ISBN: 9780763661632

Curriculum: Crocodiles; Ducks; Characters in



literature

"Once upon a time, there was a mother duck with three pretty ducklings and one-Wait a minute! What's that?" When the tale of *The Ugly Duckling* is invaded by a word-eating crocodile, the red-capped misfit "duckling" determines to make him stop with the help of the reader. Though rocking to sleep and shaking the book fail to foil the villain, he finally has enough and finds a way out for himself. Preschoolers will relish the interactive approach and the surprise ending in this colorful romp.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Alumni

Bunnies on Ice

Written and illus by:

Johanna Wright

Roaring Brook Press, 2013

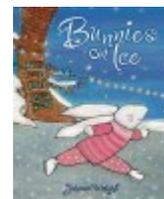
ISBN:9781596434042

Curriculum: Ice skating; Family; Winter; Confidence

Young rabbit is a self-proclaimed champion ice-skater. She describes the anticipation and joy she feels for skating through her self-confident narrative. Even when she falls, her family is there to support her and make hot chocolate after every skating session. The short prose and charming illustrations make this book a winner for reading out loud, no matter the season.

Reviewed by: Elise Edwards

Early Education Dept.



Who are we?

- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians from elementary, middle and high school.
- ☺ We know DPS students and the DPS curriculum.

What we do!

- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ This publication consists of the best books we review each month.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ETLs, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

Exclamation Mark

By: Amy Krouse Rosen-
thal

Illus. by: Tom Lichtenheld

Scholastic, 2013

ISBN:9780545436793

Curriculum: *Unique strengths; Punctu-
ation; Grammar*

Exclamation Mark is tired of standing out amongst his friends, the periods. He goes to great lengths to change his appearance, with no success. An encounter with the inquisitive Question Mark helps him realize that he has his own special voice and purpose. Rosenthal and Lichtenheld never disappoint with their combination of clever text and funny, minimalist illustrations.

Reviewed by: Elise Edwards

Early Education Dept.

Nonfiction

Paul Thurlby's Wildlife

Written and illus. by:
Paul Thurlby

Templar Books, 2013

ISBN:
9780763665630

Curriculum: *Wild ani-
mals*

Did you know that a polar bear's fur could turn green from algae when it gets too hot? This uniquely illustrated book is sure to attract eyes of all ages, while learning a fun new fact or two about various wild animals.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

Many of these books will
work in middle school, too.!

Fiction

The Price of Freedom

By: Judith Bloom
Fradin and Dennis Brin-
dell Fradin

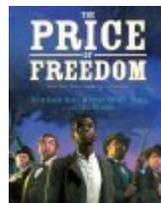
Illus. by: Eric Ve-
lasquez

Walker Books, 2013

ISBN: 9780802721662

Curriculum: *Human rights; Slavery;
Courage*

On a cold January night in 1858 John Price, his cousin Dinah, and their friend Frank escaped from their masters in Kentucky and crossed the frozen Ohio River into Ohio, a free state. But in 1850 congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act; an act that allowed slave hunters to capture runaway slaves where ever they found them. This picture book chronicles one of the most dramatic slave rescues in the United States. The people of Oberlin and Wellington, Ohio had to decide between the laws of the United States or the laws of right and wrong. This beautifully il-



lustrated picture book is a fine addition to any unit on slavery or the Underground Railroad for a wide range of readers and grade levels.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Ivy Takes Care

By: Rosemary Wells

Candlewick Press, 2013

ISBN:
9780763653521

Curriculum: *Respon-
sibility; Animal care*

Ivy loves animals. Her family doesn't have enough extra money for a pet so Ivy starts her own business of taking care of animals when their owners are on vacation. But sometimes it seems to her that she spends more of her time getting Billy Joe Butterworth out of trouble, and he can get into a lot of trouble, than taking care of her charges. Through all the trouble she keeps her head and comes to realize that she wants to go to vet school more than anything else. Not until the reader is well into the book do they find out that the story takes place in 1949, it could have been anytime.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Nonfiction

The Boston Tea Party

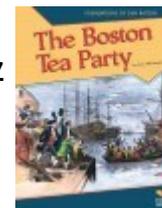
By: Ann Malaspina

Abdo, 2013

ISBN:
9781617837074

Curriculum: *Boston Tea Party; Ameri-
can Revolution; Taxation*

This title introduces readers to the



Boston Tea Party, a pivotal event leading to the American Revolution. The chronology, key players, and politics are discussed in an age-appropriate and straight forward manner. Sidebars, illustrations, charts, and timelines add support. Addressing the need for nonfiction books with a CCSS focus, the titles in the *Core Library-Foundations of Our Nation* series provide 4th-6th graders primary source material as well as activity and writing prompts which ask readers to think critically about what they've learned. Lists of books and publisher-sponsored websites are provided for additional teacher and student resources.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Frog Song

By: Brenda Z Guiberson

Illus. by: Bennacy Spirin

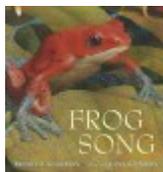
Henry Holt, 2013

ISBN: 9780805092547

Curriculum: Frogs behavior, vocalizations; Endangered species

From Costa Rica's strawberry poison dart frog to the Archey's frog of New Zealand, this oversized offering introduces readers to eleven species of frogs and toads with fascinating facts embedded in luminous illustrations. Addendums provide more facts about each species and environmental factors threatening their survival. A bibliography and list of excellent websites are a bonus.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Alumni



Millions, Billions, and Trillions: Understanding Big Numbers

By: David A. Adler

Illus. by: Edward Miller

Holiday House, 2013

ISBN: 9780823424030

Curriculum: Large numbers; Million; Billion; Trillion

A million is a lot, a billion is even more, and a trillion is really hard to imagine. If you poured out a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sugar, there would be about a million granules of sugar in there! This is a good book to introduce the concept of very large numbers, and gives good example of what a million, billion, and trillion look like in everyday life.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni



Stardines Swim High Across the Sky and Other Poems

By: Jack Prelutsky

Illus. by: Carin Berger

Greenwillow, 2012

ISBN: 9780062014641

Curriculum: Poetry; Animals

Wild and wacky creatures that are crazy combinations sail through the pages of this imaginative book. Slobsters mash their food with their claws, fountain lions spew streams of water, and rattlesnakes are mean and annoying. Detailed collage illustrations are as fun and expressive as the poems. Similar to the author's book *Scranimals*, this is another winner for young poetry lovers.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8



Deadly! The Truth About the Most Dangerous Creatures on Earth

By: Nicola Davies

Illus. by: Neal Layton

Candlewick, 2013

ISBN: 9780763662318

Curriculum: Dangerous animals

Beetles that shoot toxic liquid, exploding ants, and cats that rasp the flesh from their prey's bones are just a few of the highly dangerous animals featured in this book. From killer mammals to fish, reptiles, insects, and others, the reader learns about the natural tools animals use to hunt and protect themselves. Humorous cartoon drawings give the book a light touch, even as zebras and mice are being devoured. Students fascinated by the blood-thirsty side of the animal world will enjoy this book.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8



Gross Brain Teasers

By: Marne Ventura

Capstone Press, 2013

ISBN: 9781429699235

Curriculum: Puzzles; Logic; Lateral thinking puzzles

"Poor James. On the first day he throws up twice as many times as he does on the second day. If his total number of pukes is 12, how many barfs does he do on the first day, and how many on the second?" Take some math, logic and puzzles; mix in some disgusting body fluids; and you have the recipe for a fun book that parents may not find appealing, but one that clever boys will find entertaining and challenging. High-quality photos and a fresh layout make this one visually engaging as well.



Other titles in this series include *Gross Pranks*, *Gross Recipes*, and *Gross Science Fair Projects*.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco
Skinner MS



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

Many of these books will
work in high school, too.!

Fiction

My Beautiful Hippy

By: Janet Nichols
Lynch

Holiday House, 2013

ISBN:

9780823426034

Curriculum: Families; Choices; Expectations; 1968

It is 1968, the summer of love in the San Francisco neighborhood of Haight Asbury, where Joanne happens to live. Joanne aspires to be a concert pianist until she meets Martin, a free-spirited, long-haired, guitar-playing hippie. Her sister Denise can't wait to be married, her brother Dan can't wait to join the marines and go to Vietnam. When no one's dreams



turn out the way they expect, can they pick up the pieces and go on? This wonderful coming of age story will transport the reader back to the summer of love, for better or worse. The cover will not inspire self-selection.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Kiss & Makeup

By: Katie D. Anderson

Amazon Publishing,
2012

ISBN: 9780761463160

Curriculum: Kissing; Telepathy; Cosmetics

Emerson Taylor is struggling academically at her private high school, and she doesn't want to disappoint the aunt who is raising her. When Emerson discovers she has the power to get information from someone by kissing them, she starts a campaign to kiss as many brainy boys as she can. After she falls in love with one of the boys, she must decide whether her grades are more important than her reputation and relationships. There are some interesting and humorous twists in this book that will appeal to middle and high school girls.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8



The Floating Islands

By: Rachel Neumeier

Alfred A. Knopf, 2011

ISBN: 9780375847059

Curriculum: Family; Magic; Dragons; Political intrigue

Trei's family is dead and he must go to his mother's family house in the Floating Islands. There he sees the flying kajuraihi, the men with wings, and



strives to join them. His cousin, Araene, has her own secrets. She has powers and must dress as a boy in order to become a mage. A secret dragon's egg brings the two together to help save the dragons and stop a war.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Prophecy

By: Ellen Oh

HarperTeen, 2013

ISBN: 9780062091093

Curriculum: Fantasy; Loyalty; Prophecies; Demons; War

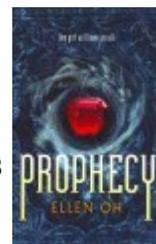
Set in a mythical Eastern country, the Seven Kingdoms are at war. Kira is the only female in the king's army and is the protector of the Prince and a demon slayer. When one kingdom plots to take over the others, Kira flees with the prince. The prophecy says he is the One and the Dragon Musado. Kira must continually prove herself in a land where only men rule and fight. She can sense demons and knows how to kill them in order for the true king's line to continue. Through her travels and adventures, she learns even more about herself than she wants to admit. For to admit her destiny, she will be the most powerful woman in the Seven Kingdoms. This book is the first of a new trilogy.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

The Fall of the House of Usher

By: Matthew K. Manning

Illus. by: Jim Jimenez
Stone Arch Books,
2013



ISBN: 9781434230249

Curriculum: Poe, Edgar Allan; Horror stories; Graphic novels

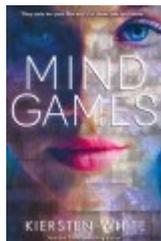
The familiar tale of the fall of a family and a home comes to life in this energetic rendition in graphic novel form. Pages outlined in black with black backgrounds set the dreary tone, while figures in eerie, incandescent shades of green act out the horror. Great graphics and minimal text will appeal to reluctant readers. Other stories in this Edgar Allan Poe graphic novel series include *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Pit and the Pendulum*, and *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco
Skinner MS

Mind Games

By: Kiersten White
Harper Teen, 2013

ISBN:
9780062135315

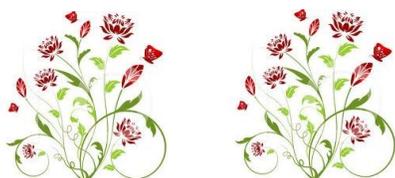


Curriculum: Espionage; Sisters;

Psychics; Super soldiers

Seventeen-year-old Fia is a killing machine, trained by a secret society since she was in elementary school. She knows killing is wrong, but she continues to carry out her assignments because she fears for her sister's life. Annie is blind, but she can see the future. The owner of the "school" where the girls live uses Annie to choose targets for Fia. This new target, though, is different. If Fia can get away with not killing him, he may be a game-changer for the girls.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College



Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Fiction

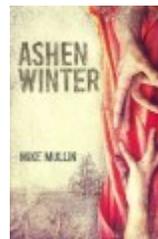
Ashen Winter

By: Mike Mullin

Tanglewood Publishing,
2012

ISBN: 9781933718750

*Curriculum: Volcanoes;
Survival; Speculative fiction*



In this second book in the planned *Ashfall Trilogy*, we rejoin Alex and his girlfriend Darla six months after the Yellowstone supervolcano eruption. Alex and Darla set off from his uncle's farm in search of his parents; however, desperation has led malicious factions to form on the road. Darla is shot and kidnapped. Alex faces many life-threatening challenges as he tries to locate and rescue Darla and find his parents. HS fans of speculative or apocalyptic fiction will enjoy this series as it provides an interesting look at a possible future after a devastating natural disaster.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

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Dave Sanger

Karen Shannon

Antonio Nicotera

Blink Once

By: Busby, Cylin
Bloomsbury, 2012
ISBN:
9781599908182



Curriculum: Comas; Love; Hospitals
After a bicycle accident seventeen-year-old West wakes up in a hospital bed. He is strapped to the bed and is unable to move or speak. Unbeknownst to him he is in a coma and has a spinal injury. As he drifts in and out of consciousness he is aware of some conversations between visitors in his room. When the girl next door, Olivia, comes to visit, West finds he is able to communicate with her. Nobody knows she is visiting West everyday. West begins to fall in love with Olivia. West's parents opt for experimental surgery. As West recovers from his surgery, he discovers things with Olivia are not as they seem.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

Beautiful Lies

By: Jessica Warman
Walker, 2012
ISBN:
9780802723383



Curriculum: People with disabilities; Friendship; High school
Eighteen-year-old Alice and Rachel are mono chorionic, monoamniotic twins. They have lived with their aunt and uncle since their parents were killed in an automobile accident. Rachel is very conscientious while Alice tends to get in trouble. One night Alice goes missing. Rachel is distraught because she

knows her twin is in danger. Given Alice's reckless destructive behavior in her past, her aunt, uncle, and the police are not convinced that she is in danger. The only problem is that they do not know that Alice and Rachel changed places the night the real Rachel disappeared. The real Alice is reluctant to tell them she and Rachel changed identities. As each day passes, the real Alice becomes more frantic to find her twin.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

Crash and Burn

By: Michael Hassan
HarperCollins, 2013
ISBN: 9780062112903
Curriculum: School Shootings; ADD; Teen-age Frenemies;

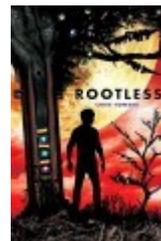


Steven "Crash"
Crashinsky is the least likely guy you would expect to be a hero. Since elementary school, he has struggled with ADD, a father who actively dislikes him, a family that doesn't understand him, and a real-life arch nemesis: David Burnett. David is a super genius who has his own struggles and he believes that he and Crash are inextricably tied together by destiny, so when Burn holds the entire school hostage, Crash is the only person who can stop him.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

Rootless

By: Chris Howard
Scholastic: 2012
ISBN: 978-0-545-38789-7



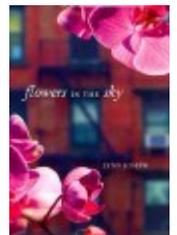
Curriculum: Dystopia; Environmental Degradation; Genetically modified foods; Adventure

Since the Darkness, nothing grows but the corn created by Gen-Tech; the only thing resistant to the locusts that plague the Midwest plains. Banyan creates trees from scrap metal and glass. His are the best, but they are not real trees, which Banyan desperately wants to see. When he finds a picture of his long-lost father chained to a real tree, Banyan knows he must travel west to find them. It is a dangerous journey, rife with enemies, pirates, and human traffickers. As Banyan searches for his father and Zion, where the real trees grow, what he discovers is a bigger surprise than he could ever have imagined.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

Flowers in the Sky

By: Lynn Joseph
Harper Teen, 2013
ISBN: 9780060297947



Curriculum: Immigrants; Brothers and sisters; New York; Dominican Republic; Flowers

Fifteen-year-old Nina lives in the Dominican Republic and has a talent for growing flowers. But then her mother forces her to move to New York to live with a brother she has not seen in ten years. Gone is the ocean, the beach, the casual Sundays, and gone are her beloved flowers. She tries to fit in, accept the sterile environment of the apartment, but her brother is keeping secrets and the realities of her new life seem insurmountable. The one person who seems to understand her is forbidden and may have a secret of his own. This story is both beautiful and poignant.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.

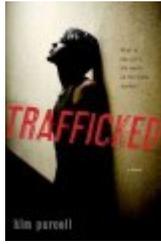
Trafficked

By: Kim Purcell

Viking, 2012

ISBN:

9780670012800



Curriculum: Human trafficking; Slavery; Moldova; Los Angeles

After the death of her parents, Hannah and her Babushka struggle to make ends meet in their Moldovan home. When Hannah is offered four hundred dollars a week to nanny for a Russian family in Los Angeles, it seems like a dream come true. This is her chance to learn English and begin working towards her goal of becoming a doctor. But the dream quickly changes into a nightmare as the true nature of her servitude is revealed. This gripping tale is horrifying, gritty, and realistic.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen

TJ H.S.

Now the bright morning star,
day's harbinger, Comes danc-
ing from the east, and leads
with her The flowery May,
who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip, and the
pale primrose. Hail, bounteous
May, that doth inspire Mirth,
and youth, and warm desire;
Woods and groves are of thy
dressing, Hill and dale doth
boast thy blessing, Thus we
salute thee with our early
song, And welcome thee, and
wish thee long.

John Milton

Song—On May Morning

What will you read this summer?



For more suggestions visit:

<http://summerreading.ning.com/profiles/blogs/booklists>